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A QUARTERLY DEVOTED TO SYNTHETIC  
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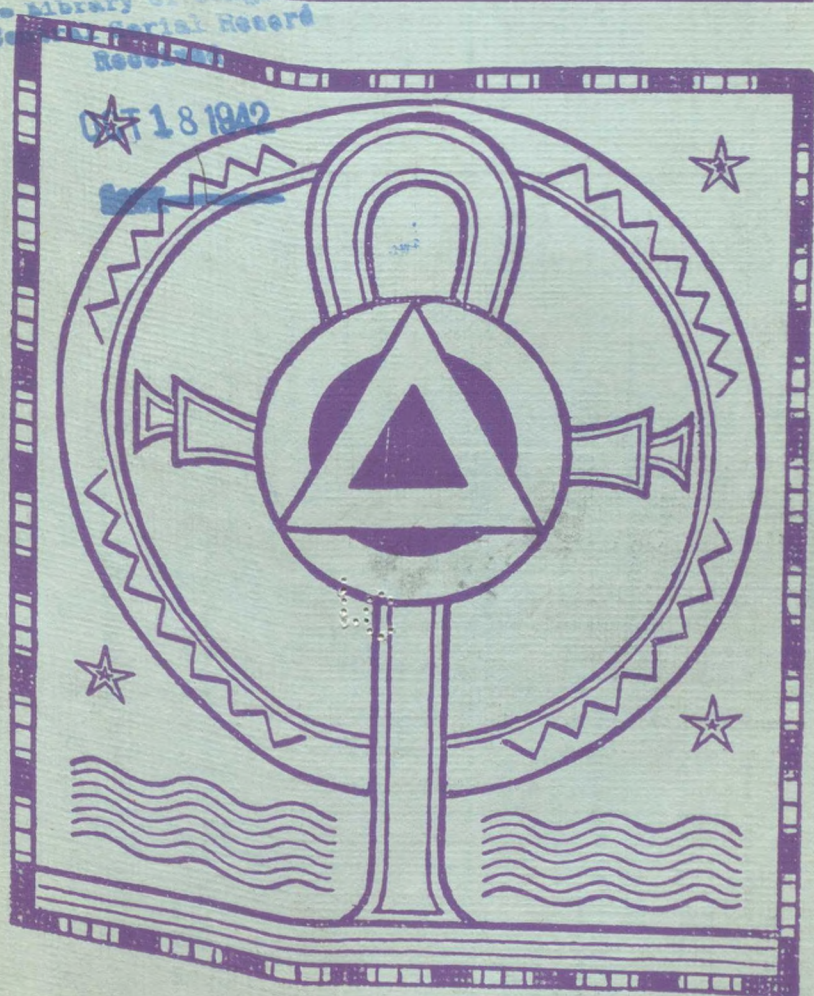
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# SHRINE of WISDOM

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE YIN FU KING .. .. .	121
FABLE OF CATTWG THE WISE. THE FOWLER AND THE COOPER .. .. .	126
THE LADY JULIAN OF NORWICH .. .. .	127
FIRST PRINCIPLES .. .. .	133
ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY. PROCLUS .. .. .	134
ARISTOTLE ON WISDOM .. .. .	137
VERSES FROM THE MAHABHARATA .. .. .	140
EXTRACTS FROM THE COMMENTARY OF SIM- PLICIUS UPON THE ENCHIRIDION OF EPIC- TETUS .. .. .	141
JEWELS .. .. .	144

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## OBJECTS:—

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- (2) To enshrine the most essential and vital aspects of Truth which have been presented by the great religious, philosophical, and mystical systems of the world, and by the known great Teachers of mankind, and which are most capable of elevating, enriching, and expanding the human consciousness.
- (3) To contribute towards the synthesis and harmonious integration of all presentations of the wisdom of the ages by relating all particular expressions to the universal first principles from which all are derived.
- (4) To preserve at the same time the peculiar beauty and appeal which each particular expression possesses as a unique and distinctive facet of the One Integral Truth.

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The Editors accept responsibility for all articles, but invite assistance and contributions on the understanding that they are both voluntary and impersonal.



# THE SHRINE *of* WISDOM

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## THE YIN FU KING\*

### SECTION I

1. *To observe the Tao of Heaven and conform to the mode of Its operation is the term of all human achievement.*

The word Tao has various significations. It has been named "The Supreme Paradox", "The Infinite Truth which can never be uttered", "The Ultimate to which all things conduct us".†

In the *Yin Fu King* Tao is considered in Its aspect as the Way of Heaven, the Law, the Divine Providence and Inexhaustible Store, the Infinite Source of all that is.

One of the most sublime objects of human thought is the solution of the apparent contradictions of the operations of Tao, and the resolving in some measure of the mysteries of manifestation.

To observe the Tao of Heaven requires an exalted enlightenment. To conform to the mode of Its operations demands obedience to the Law of Tao.

Since man is a child of Heaven and Earth, essentially endowed with perfect principles, all men, without exception, may ultimately attain the term of all human achievement: Perfective-union with Tao.

\* For the introduction to this article see the *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 89.

† See *The Simple Way of Lao Tszé*, p. 9 (*Shrine of Wisdom Manual*, No. 8).



2. *Heaven possesses five despoilers; and he who comprehends their operations will flourish.*

The five despoilers, or robbers, or plunderers, as they are termed, are the five subtle "elements" which operate in and through the manifested natural Heavens and Earth. They substand the gross elements, through the permutations of which all natural existences are produced.

Every element contains all the others in various proportions according to the peculiar nature of each.

They are "despoilers" in as much as they appropriate subsidiary natures for their own purposes. This appropriation is a necessary condition of growth and without it evolution and progress would be impossible. That which is used by superior natures is thereby transformed and enabled to participate in a higher and fuller mode of life. Thus the despoliation is only analogical.

Chinese thought abounds in fivefold divisions with numerous correspondences. It is therefore not surprising to find in its symbolism five elements, which are given the following correlations:

Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
East	South	Centre	West	North
Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black

The despoiling processes may be said to operate in the gross elements of the material world thus: Earth, which is the Centre, may be despoiled by Wood—that is by the implements of husbandry, which in ancient China were largely made of wood; the mineral is also despoiled by vegetation; Water is despoiled by Earth, the solid despoiling the liquid; Fire is despoiled by Water, which extinguishes it; Metal by Fire, which melts it; Wood by Metal, which is used in various ways to chop or divide it.

There is also a process by which the elements are generated from one another: Earth generates metal in its inner caverns and recesses; Water generates Wood, being necessary for its very life; Fire generates Earth, as worlds are said to emerge from a molten state; Metal generates Water, by being resolved into its primal element; Wood generates Fire through being burned.



This is more easily seen in the following table:—

	<i>Generates</i>	<i>Despoiled by</i>
Wood	Fire	Metal
Fire	Earth	Water
Earth	Metal	Wood
Metal	Water	Fire
Water	Wood	Earth

According to "The Great Plan", as set forth in the *Shu King* (Part V, Book IV), "These elements fight and strive together, now overcoming, now overcome, till by such interaction a harmony of their influences arises and production goes on with vigour and beauty"; and he who comprehends these mysteries "will in his wisdom flourish".

3. *The nature of Heaven belongs also to man; the mind of man is likewise a source of power. When the Way of Heaven is established in man his progress is assured.*

Because man has a nature akin to Heaven, as well as to Earth, he has also within himself an individualized source of intelligence and power, superior to nature, which gives him the capacity to know and follow the Way of Heaven.

Man, in his corporeal nature, is subject to the cosmic laws, but when he voluntarily conforms to the Way of Heaven he rises above these laws and his attainment of the heights is assured.

4. *When heaven puts forth its destructive powers, the stars and constellations become hidden in the void. When Earth puts forth its destructive powers, dragons and serpents appear on dry land. When Man puts forth his destructive powers, Heaven and Earth resume their normal courses. When Heaven and Man exercise their powers in concord, the transformations of nature enter upon another phase.*

The Taoist writings abound in symbolic analogies. In this passage are depicted the opposite yet complementary modes of activity and rest which characterize not only Heaven and Earth but also Man and all things.

The powers of destruction signify the withdrawing of manifested existences into their essential natures, passing through the mode of rest which is the opposite of the mode of activity by which they are manifested.

The Dragons and Serpents symbolize natural principles or



forces, which, having no physical existence, are unaffected by material changes.

Since man is the only factor which can interfere in any way with the operations of Heaven and Earth in nature, these resume their normal courses when man's powers are inoperative.

When Heaven and Man exert their powers in concord—that is when Man collaborates with the Laws of Heaven, employing his own creative genius through the splendour of his art—a new and mightier order is established.

5. *The five despoilers are also in the mind of man; but when he can direct their activities after the manner of Heaven, space and time are his to use, and all things are transmuted through him.*

The five despoilers or elements or powers of nature are within the mind of man as ideas; and by the exercise of the five virtues, with which they are analogous, man comes to ordinate the activities of his corporeal nature.

The five virtues and the five elements, according to the Chinese, have the following correspondences:

Propriety	Uprightness of Mind	Good Faith
Wood	Fire	Earth
	Enlightenment	Benevolence
	Metal	Water

When man has reached his ideal completion and acts always according to the virtues, then, even as Heaven moves with vigour and beauty in perfect harmony, so will he participate in the work of perfecting all spatial and temporal things, elevating and transforming them by imparting a perfection higher than that of nature.

6. *Man may appear either wise or stupid, yet one of these attributes may lie hidden in the other.*

The wise may sometimes appear to be foolish and the foolish to be wise. But in apparent foolishness profound wisdom may be expressed and in apparent wisdom, great foolishness.

The truly wise have always recognized their own foolishness compared with the wisdom of Tao; but the foolish fail to recognize their own ignorance.

The foolish of every age have sought to clothe the nakedness



of their ignorance with bespangled and many-coloured garments; while true wisdom is clothed in simplicity.

7. *The abuse of the nine apertures of the body especially concerns the three which are considered to be the most important, and these may be either in action or at rest.*

The nine apertures of the body pertain to man's physical relations with that which is external to himself.

The three which are considered the most important are the ears, the eyes, and the mouth; the channels of hearing, sight, and taste.

Abuse of these results in exhaustion, restlessness, and satiety; but ordinate action and rest lead to vigour, serenity, and satisfaction.

It is by the interplay of the opposites of action and rest that variety and refreshment arise. This is the normal course of natural activity; yet all the senses should be subject to man's discrimination and will.

8. *When Fire is produced from Wood, if calamity arises from Fire the Wood will be vanquished. When evil arises in a state, and activities ensue, there follows disaster. Those who know how to purify and discipline themselves are named Sages.*

Fire produced from wood gives warmth which is beneficial, but when it is unchecked disastrous results may follow.

Evil in a state originates in wrongly oriented ambitions, desires, and thoughts, which when actively expressed may result in the disruption of the state.

But he who rightly applies the law of action and rest, wisely conducts the work of culture and refinement, for he knows by Wu Wei when to act and when to be inactive.

The Sage is one who has reached this state of perfection, and whose outward poise is the reflection of inner harmony.

(To be continued)



## FABLE OF CATTWG THE WISE

## THE FOWLER AND THE COOPER

A Fowler and a Cooper went together into a wood, the Fowler in search of woodcocks, and the Cooper in quest of sticks for making hoops. They had not gone far into the wood, when each of them was making the very best use of his eyes in search of what he wanted, "Lo!" cried the Fowler, "I see a woodcock." "Where?" asked the Cooper. "There yonder, directly before thee," said the Fowler, "at the foot of the alder-bush; near where thou seest the marshy spot." "Is it near that hoop-stave yonder?" asked the Cooper. "Hoop-stave? whereabouts is thy hoop-stave?" asked the Fowler. "It is at the foot of that hazel bush, which thou seest straight before thee," said the Cooper. "I cannot see thy hazel tree, nor thy hoop-stave," replied the Fowler. "Nor I indeed thy woodcock, or thy alder-bush," replied the other.

Now as the case was with these two men, so it is with the generality of mankind; for there is no man in the world but casts his eye around in search of the object he wishes to find; and he soon discovers anything which is like it; whereas an object for which he cares nothing he cannot see be it ever so visible. So faithfully true are the old proverbs which say, "Sharp-sighted is every eye that seeks." "The eye of the anxious is quick sighted." "The eye of the indifferent can see nothing, be the object ever so visible; but the eye of the seeker will see quickly, like the Fowler and the Cooper in the Wood."



## THE LADY JULIAN OF NORWICH

A modern anonymous author\* wrote "The divine purpose is fulfilled in good", and these words express the very essence of the Lady Julian's "Revelations". This same writer speaks of her as "Julian the beloved" and "Julian of the open eyes", both phrases showing with attractive accuracy two outstanding characteristics of the anchoress of Norwich. He adds: "This wise Julian is one of my angels; with her, I see divine love in a world of strife, of darkening shadow, of self-made wrath and sin." The aptness of these comments is likely to be confirmed by those who have read the "Revelations", and, through them, have themselves come to love the Lady Julian.

Very little is known of Dame Julian's parentage, or of her life before she became an anchoress at the church in Norwich, and such details are not important. She is thought to have been a Benedictine nun of Carrow, but for the greater part of her life her home was at the anchorage in the churchyard of St. Julian in Norwich, and the foundations of the "cell" are still to be seen. It must be remembered that she was not entirely cut off from the world—one small window of her "house" opened into the church, enabling her to join in mass and to receive communion. Another and a larger one faced the outside world and would permit of her speaking with those who visited her for advice and consolation. Such anchorages were common in the fourteenth century, and often included an extra room for a companion or servant, who attended to the simple household requirements.

It is not known what education, if any, Julian had received, though the conjecture that she was a member of the Carrow Nunnery is very plausible. To those who read the "Revelations", it is evident that she was an exceptionally thoughtful woman, warm-hearted but clear-minded, a pious and dutiful daughter of the Church who was wishful to interpret her visions in terms compatible with her beliefs, but resolute to understand these visions and face their implications. Seldom

\* *A Modern Mystic's Way*.—Anon.



have heart and mind been better balanced. The religious background of her life and her intense regard for the Church's presentation of religion must not be forgotten when we bring a modern outlook to bear upon her writings.

It is of interest that the greater number of her revelations were received during one day in May, 1373, when she was thirty years of age, though a few shorter enlightenments, the result of her meditations, came to her at later dates. Her account of them, contained in *Revelations of Divine Love*, was recorded nearly twenty years later, though there is an earlier and quite brief summary, thought to be compiled soon after she had had the original shewings. The work for which she is known was the result of years of thought: the loving achievement of continued and careful meditation upon the spiritual experience she had had when so much younger. Her book is no emotional outpouring, but a frank and happy record of the great blessing which God had allowed her to enjoy. She had for many years desired and prayed for such a divine disclosure, and she is obviously anxious to share her happiness as fully as possible, as an expression of gratitude to her Maker.

Julian experienced three methods of communication. She says, "All this was shewed in three (ways): that is to say, by bodily sight, and by word formed in my understanding, and by spiritual sight"; or, as we should say now, by corporeal vision, by interior locutions, and by intellectual awareness. She herself says, "As for bodily sight, I have said as I saw, as truly as I can. And as for the words formed, I have said them right, as our Lord shewed me them. And as for the ghostly sight,\* I have said somewhat, but I may never fully tell it." Her difficulty in interpreting the last formless intellectual enlightenment is apparent to herself, for she says, "I cannot, nor may not, show it as openly nor as fully as I would"—no doubt because of its ineffable nature. Nevertheless, she discusses these intuitions very thoroughly, and endeavours to set forth clearly the conclusions she has been helped to reach.

It is impossible on this occasion to consider more than two or three problems dealt with by Julian, and those concerning abstract points of theology should prove of most interest.

Thus for example she relates, "And after this, I saw God in

\* Spiritual vision.



a point; that is to say in my understanding: by which sight I saw that He is all thing." This is amplified in a later passage of great beauty, and one, too, which gives an example of the three means of communication being employed in the one shewing. "And in this He shewed me a little thing, the quantitie of an hazel-nut, lying in the palme of my hand; and it was as round as a ball. I looked thereupon with the eye of my understanding: I thought *what may this be?* And it was answered generally thus, '*It is all that is made.*' I marvelled how it might last, for methought it might suddenly have fallen to naught for little(ness). And I was answered in my understanding: '*It lasteth, and shall ever last, for that God loveth it*'. And so All-thing has the Being by the love of God. In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it: the second is that God loveth it: and the third is that God keepeth it." It is rarely that the profundity of God's goodness, wisdom and power has been expressed more exactly, simply and lovingly. One is reminded\* of Blake's verse:

"To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And heaven in a wild flower;  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour."

Throughout her writing, Julian shows her conviction of the pervading goodness in this world and of the ultimate goodness of all that is. The following illustrates her fundamental trust in God's care for His creation. "And then (in heaven) shall verily be made known to us the meaning . . . where He saith, 'All shall be well; and thou shalt see thyself that all manner of things shall be well': . . . then shall none of us be stirred to say in any wise, 'Lord, if it had been thus it had been full well'. But we shall say all, with one voice, 'Lord, blessed mote Thou be, for it is thus: thus it is well.'"

At the same time this confidence and happiness in God raises a problem which she puts to herself thus: "Methought, if sin had not been, we should have all been clean and like to our Lord as He made us. And thus in my folly . . . often I wondered why, by the great foreseeing wisdom of God, the beginning of sin was not letted, for then, methought, all should have been well." Plainly this problem of sin fretted her mind. As an

\* Referred to by W. R. Inge in *Christian Mysticism*.



avowed and pious daughter of the Church, she felt that her faith and beliefs should have overcome her doubts; but when, during a revelation, she had the opportunity to bring forward her questioning (in her thought), she grasped the occasion. Her apprehension was answered in no uncertain terms. "That which is impossible for thee", she was told, "is not impossible for Me: I shall save My word in all things and I shall make all things well." But such an assertion could not, of itself, solve her problem, and Julian continued to consider the subject over a period of years, and from time to time enlightenment was forthcoming. She seems to have found special help in a vision, and her careful interpretation of it led to a partial unravelling of her difficulty, and she states later: "Sin is behovable, but all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well. In this naked word 'sin' our Lord brought to my mind generally all that is not good. . . . But I saw not sin: for I believe it hath no manner of substance, nor any part of being, nor might it be known but by the pain that is caused thereof; and this pain . . . purgeth and maketh us to know ourself."

"Julian's view of human personality is remarkable as it reminds us of the Neo-platonic doctrine that there is a higher and lower self, of which the former is untainted by the sins of the latter. 'I saw and understood full surely', she says, 'that in every soul that shall be saved there is a godly will that never assented to sin, nor never shall; which will is so good that it may never work evil, but evermore continually it willeth good, and worketh good in the sight of God . . . we all have this blessed will whole and safe in our Lord.'"<sup>\*</sup>

And further, "Highly we ought to enjoy that God dwelleth in our soul and much more highly that our soul dwelleth in God . . . thus was my understanding led to know that our soul is made Trinity, like to the unmade Blessed Trinity, known and loved from without beginning, and in the making, oned to the Maker" . . . "Our reason is grounded in God which is substantial naturehood." Here Julian is indicating why sin cannot prevail—we are made in God's triadic image: part of us is eternally exempt from the possibility of sinning, but our lesser self has the power of choice, whereby the risk of sin and

<sup>\*</sup> *Christian Mysticism*, by W. R. Inge.



evil was permitted by our Creator, Whose omnipotence embraces every contingency, and, in this particular, causes every departure from goodness to become, eventually, a means of return to goodness, because of the indwelling "Word".

The subject of prayer is dealt with at some length, and, although this does not appear to have been such a problem to Julian as that of man's sinning, she evidently felt the need for guidance. A series of quotations from her shewings will give some idea of her trend of thought in this matter, and should prove illuminating and of practical help. "In that time", she writes, "the custom of our praying was brought to mind, how we use for lack of understanding and knowing of love to make (use of) many means. Then saw I truly that it is more worship to God and more very delight that we faithfully pray to Himself of His goodness . . . than if we made (use of) all the means that heart can think. . . . For the goodness of God is the highest prayer and it cometh down to the lowest part of our need. It quickeneth our soul and bringeth it in life, and maketh it for to wax in grace and virtue . . . for it is the same grace that the soul seeketh and ever shall seek, till we know verily that He hath us all in Himself beclosed."

"After this our Lord shewed concerning Prayers, . . . in which I see two conditions, one is rightfulness, another is assured trust. But oftentimes our trust is not full; for we are not sure that God heareth us, as we think because of our unworthiness, and because we feel right naught . . ." "But our Lord said to me 'I am the ground of thy beseechings' . . . Here may we see that our beseeching is not the cause of God's goodness . . . therefore saith He to us 'Pray inwardly, although thou think it hath no savour to thee.' And also to Prayer belongeth understanding. Thanksgiving is a true inward knowing . . . and sometimes for plenteousness it breaketh out with voice and saith 'Good Lord! Great thanks be to Thee: Blessed mote Thou be.'" "Prayer is a right understanding of that fulness of joy that is to come, with great longing and certain trust . . . and thus meaneth He when He saith 'I am the ground of thy beseeching.' Prayer oneth the soul to God."

The essential thing which Julian draws from this shewing is that our soul should cleave to the goodness of God. "Then", she says, "saw I truly that it is more worship to God and



more very delight, that we faithfully pray to Himself of His Goodness and cleave thereunto by His Grace, with true understanding, and steadfast by love, than if we took all the means that heart can think."

Julian has much more to say about prayer and those particularly interested are advised to read more of her comments.\*

It is appropriate to finish this section with a prayer of her own which certainly embodies her main thought on the subject: "God, of Thy Goodness give me Thyself: for Thou art enough to me, and I may nothing ask that is less that may be full worship to Thee; and if I ask anything that is less, ever me wanteth,—but only in Thee I have all."

It is easy to linger with Julian and share her overflowing happiness and deep knowing of God. Such simple fervour and so alert a mind are not often met with in the same person. Her eagerness to share her revealed treasure with her "even-Christians" may be gauged by the care she took to present her thoughts as plainly and convincingly as she was able. Living thus with her is both a solace and an inspiration. A few more extracts may furnish the key to her success both in interesting others in her writings and endearing herself to those who come to know her.

"I saw no wrath but on man's party, and that forgiveth He in us. It is the most impossible that may be, that God should be wroth . . . our life is all grounded and rooted in love . . . suddenly is the soul oned to God, when it is truly peaced of itself; for in Him is found no wrath. And thus I saw when we be all in peace and love we find no contrariness."

"There is no creature that is made that may wits how much and how sweetly and how tenderly our Maker loveth us."

"Wouldst thou wit thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Wit it well: love was His meaning. Who shewed it thee? Love. What shewed He thee? Love. Wherefore shewed He it thee? For Love."

\* In the following works, to which the writers of this article are indebted and from which all the quotations are taken:

*The English Mystics*, D. Knowles, Chap. VI.

*Christian Mysticism*, W. R. Inge, Lecture V.

*The Lady Julian*, R. H. Thouless.



"God is all thing that is gode, as to my sight, and the gode-ness all thing hath, it is He."

These are the final words of her own "Revelations":

"And I saw full surely in this and in all, that ere God made us, He loved us: which love was never slacked, nor ever shall be. And in this love He hath done all His works: and in this love He hath made all things profitable to us; and in this love our life is everlasting: in our making we had beginning: but the love wherein He made us was in Him from without beginning. In which love we have our beginning. And all this shall we see in God without end, which may Jesus grant us."

Truth seeth God.

Wisdom beholdeth God.

May we learn to share the Lady Julian's seeing and beholding!

## FIRST PRINCIPLES

It is requisite that he who ascends to the principle of things should investigate whether it is possible there can be anything better than the supposed principle; and if something more excellent is found, the same enquiry should again be made respecting that, till we arrive at the highest conceptions, than which we have no longer any more venerable.

Nor should we stop in our ascent till we find this to be the case. For there is no occasion to fear that our progression will be through an unsubstantial void, by conceiving something above the first principles which is greater than and surpasses their nature. For it is not possible for our conceptions to take such a mighty leap as to equal, and much less to pass beyond, the dignity of the first principles of things.

*Simplicius.*



## THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS\*

## Proposition CXXXVII

*Every Unity in conjunction with The One gives subsistence to the being which participates of it.*

For as The One gives subsistence to all things, so likewise is It the cause of the participated Unities, and of beings suspended from these Unities. But the unity of every being produces the peculiarity which shines forth in that particular being. And The One indeed is the cause of existence simply; but unity is the cause of alliance because it is connascent with The One. Hence unity is that which of itself defines the being which participates of it, and essentially exhibits in itself a superessential peculiarity. For everywhere from that which is primary the secondary derives that which it is. If, therefore, there is a certain superessential peculiarity of Deity, this also belongs to the being which participates of it superessentially.

## Proposition CXXXVIII

*Of all the Deified natures which participate of the Divine peculiarity the first and highest is being itself*

For if being is beyond intellect and life, as has been demonstrated, and if it is also after The One the cause of the greatest number of effects, being will be the highest Deified nature. For it is more single than life and intellect and is on this account entirely more venerable. But there is not any thing else prior to it except The One. For prior to unical multitude what else can there be except The One? But being is unical multitude as consisting of bound and infinity. And, in short, the Superessential One is prior to essence. Since also in the illuminations which are imparted to secondary natures The One alone extends beyond being. But being is immediately posterior to The One. For that which is being in capacity, but is not yet

\* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 56 to 89.



being, is nevertheless according to its own nature one. And that which follows the being that is in capacity is now being in energy. Hence in the principles of things Non-being\* is immediately beyond being, as something more excellent, and no other than The One Itself.

#### Proposition CXXXIX

*All things which participate of the Divine Unities originate indeed from being, but end in a corporeal nature.*

For being is the first of participants, but body the last; for we say that there are Divine bodies. For the highest of all the genera of bodies, souls, and intellects are attributed to the Gods, so that, in every order, things analogous to the Gods may connect and preserve secondary natures, and that each number may be a whole, containing all things in itself, according to the whole which is in a part, and possessing prior to other things the Divine peculiarity. The Divine genus, therefore, subsists corporeally, psychically, and intellectually. And it is evident that all these are Divine according to participation. For that which is primarily Divine subsists in the Unities. Hence, the participants of the Divine Unities originate indeed from being, but end in a corporeal nature.

#### Proposition CXL

*All the Powers of Divine Natures, having a supernal origin, and proceeding through appropriate media, extend as far as to the last of things, and to the terrestrial regions*

For neither does any thing intercept these Powers, and exclude them from being present with all things. For they are not in want of places and intervals, on account of Their unrestrained transcendancy with respect to all things, and a presence everywhere unmingled. Nor is that which is adapted to participate of Them prohibited from participation. But as soon as any thing is prepared for participation, They also are present, neither then approaching, not prior to this being absent, but

\* For as matter is deservedly called non-being, because it is worse than all things; in like manner this appellation is proper to the First Cause, as He is better than all things.—Thomas Taylor.



always possessing an invariable sameness of subsistence. If, therefore, any terrene nature is adapted to the participation of these Divine Powers, They are present with it, and fill all things with Themselves. And although They are in a greater degree present with superior natures, They are also present with those of a middle nature, according to the order which they possess, and with such natures as are last They are present in an ultimate degree. From on high, therefore, They extend Themselves as far as to the last of things. Hence, also, in last natures there are representations of such as are first, and *all things sympathize with all\**; secondary, indeed, pre-existing in first natures, but first natures presenting Themselves to the view in such as are second. For every thing subsists in a three-fold manner, either according to cause, or according to hyparxis, or according to participation.

\* He who understands this will survey the universe as one great animal, all whose parts are in union and consent with each other; so that nothing is foreign and detached; nothing, strictly speaking, void of sympathy and life. For though various parts of the world, when considered as separated from the whole, are destitute of *peculiar* life, yet they possess some degree of animation, however inconsiderable, when viewed with relation to the universe. Life indeed may be compared to a perpetual and universal sound; and the soul of the world resembles a lyre, or some other musical instrument, from which we may suppose this sound to be emitted. But from the unbounded diffusion as it were of the mundane soul, every thing participates of this harmonical sound, in greater or less perfection, according to the dignity of its nature. So that while life everywhere resounds, the most abject of beings may be said to retain a faint echo of the melody produced by the mundane lyre.

—Thomas Taylor.

(To be continued)



## ARISTOTLE ON WISDOM \*

Aristotle denominates the metaphysical science at one time *wisdom*, at another time the *first philosophy*, and at another *theology*; signifying by each of these appellations that it does not rank among those arts and sciences which are conversant with the knowledge of things necessary, or which inquire into things subservient to the advantages and conveniences of the mortal life, but that it is a knowledge and science to be pursued for its own sake, and which speculates the first principles and causes of things—for these are beings in the most eminent degree. Hence, in the sixth book of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, he defines wisdom to be the most accurate of sciences, the science of things most honourable, that is, principles, and the summit of all disciplines.

With the multitude, indeed, merged in sense, whatever does not contribute to the good of the merely animal life is considered as a thing of no value; and hence, by the larger part of them it is regarded with indifference, and by the greater number with contempt. It is vain to talk to such as these of a good purely intellectual, which is independent of chance and fortune, which is desirable for its own sake, and which confers the most pure and permanent felicity on its possessor: for what passion can it gratify? what sense can it charm? Ignorant of the mighty difference between things necessary and such as are eminently good they mistake means for ends, pursue the flying mockeries of being—for such are all sensible natures—and idly attempt to grasp the phantoms of felicity.

The conceptions of the experimental philosopher who expects to find Truth in the labyrinths of matter are, in this respect, not much more elevated than those of the vulgar; for he is ignorant that Truth is the most splendid of all things, that she is the constant companion of Divinity, and proceeds together with Him through the universe; that the shining traces of her feet are only conspicuous in form; and that in the dark

\* From Thomas Taylor's *Introduction to the Metaphysics of Aristotle*.



windings of matter she left nothing but a most obscure and fleeting resemblance of herself.

This delusive phantom, however, the man of modern science ardently explores, unconscious that he is running in profound darkness and infinite perplexity, and that he is hastening after an object which eludes all detection and mocks all pursuit.

It is well said by Aristotle that wisdom is the science of principles and causes, since he who knows these knows also the effects of which they are the source. Such a one knows particulars so far as they are comprehended in universals, and this knowledge is superior to that which is partial and co-ordinated to a partial object: for does not everything energize in a becoming manner when it energizes according to its own power and nature? As, for instance, does not nature, in conformity to the order of its essence, energize naturally, and intellect intellectually? For this being admitted, it follows that knowledge subsists according to the nature of that which knows, and not according to the nature of that which is known.

Particulars, therefore, when they are beheld enveloped in their causes, are then known in the most excellent manner; and this is the peculiarity of intellectual perception and resembles, if it be lawful so to speak, the knowledge of Divinity Himself. For the most exalted conception we can form of His knowledge is this, that He knows all things in such a manner as is accommodated to His nature, namely, divisible things indivisibly; things multiplied uniformly; things generated according to an eternal intelligence, and totally whatever is partial. Hence, He knows sensibles without possessing sense, and without being present to things in place knows them prior to all local presence, and imparts to every thing that which it is capable of receiving. The mutable essence, therefore, of apparent natures is not known by Him in an unstable, but in a definite manner; nor does He know that which is subject to all-various mutations, dubiously, but in a manner perpetually the same; for, by knowing Himself, He knows every thing of which He is the cause, possessing a knowledge transcendently more accurate than that which is co-ordinate to the objects of knowledge. Hence in order to know sensible natures, He is not indigent of sense, or opinion, or science; for it is Himself Who produces all these, and in the unfathomable depths of



the intellection of Himself comprehends a united knowledge of them, according to cause and in one simplicity of perception.

Wisdom, therefore, considered as a causal knowledge of particulars, resembles the knowledge of Divinity and is consequently most honourable and most excellent: hence the wise man, from resembling, must be the friend of Divinity. Beautifully, therefore, is it observed by Aristotle that "The man who can live in the pure enjoyment of his intellect, and who properly cultivates that divine principle, is happiest in himself and most beloved by the Gods. For if the Gods have any regard to what passes among men (as it appears They have), it is probable that They will rejoice in that which is most excellent and by nature most nearly allied to Themselves; and as this is intellect, that They will requite the man who most loves and honours this, both from his regard to that which is dear to Themselves, and from his acting a part which is laudable and right."

The contemplative or intellectual energy, indeed, when it is possessed in the highest perfection of which our nature is capable, raises its possessor above the condition of humanity. "For a life according to intellect", says the Stagirite, "is more excellent than that which falls to the lot of man: since he does not thus live, so far as he is a man, but so far as he contains something divine. And as much as this divine part of him differs from the composite, so much also does this energy differ from that of the other virtues. If, therefore, intellect compared with man is divine, the life also which is according to intellect will be divine with respect to human life.

"It is, however, requisite that we should not follow the exhortations of those who say that man should be wise in human, and a mortal in mortal concerns, but we should endeavour as much as possible to immortalize ourselves, and to do everything which may contribute to a life according to our most excellent part. For this far transcends all the other parts in power and dignity."

After this he shows that intellect is the true man, from its being the most powerful, principal, and excellent in our nature; "So that", says he, "it would be absurd not to choose that which is our proper life but that which belongs to something different from ourselves."

Ridiculous, therefore, as well as grovelling, are those concep-



tions which lead men to value knowledge so far only as it contributes to the necessities, the comforts, and the refinements of the merely human life; and partial and unscientific is that definition of virtue which makes its highest energies to be those of morality: for moral virtue is more human, but intellectual more divine. The former is preparatory to felicity; but the latter, when perfect, is accompanied with perfect beatitude. Virtuous, therefore, is the man who relieves the corporeal wants of others, who wipes away the tear of sorrow, and gives agony repose; but more virtuous he who, by disseminating wisdom, expels ignorance from the soul and thus benefits the immortal part of man. For it may indeed be truly said that he who has not even a knowledge of common things is a brute among men; that he who has an accurate knowledge of human concerns alone is a man among brutes; but that he who knows all that can be known by intellectual energy is a god among men.

## VERSES FROM THE MAHABHARATA

How can the man who ease pursues  
 The praise of knowledge ever earn?  
 All those the path of toil must choose—  
 Of ceaseless toil—who care to learn.  
 Who knowledge seeks must ease refuse;  
 Who ease prefers must knowledge lose.

The night approaches now: hold fast  
 The lamp of holy knowledge, bright  
 With ever slowly kindling light,  
 To guide thee till the gloom is past.



# EXTRACTS FROM THE COMMENTARY OF SIMPLICIUS UPON THE ENCHIRIDION OF EPICTETUS \*

*"Suffer not yourself to be exalted with any excellence that is not properly your own. . . . You will say, then: What is a man's own? I answer: A right use of his ideas . . ."*

The most proper sense of this use of ideas, as reason and nature direct, I look upon to be a desire of those things that are good and an aversion and detestation of those that are evil. . . . And this may very well be called our own proper excellence, because the regulation of our desires and aversions according to nature is always in our own power, though the exerting of these and making them effectual by outward acts is not always so. . . .

As the particular commendation of a carpenter, considered as a carpenter, is his working according to the rules of art and proportion, so the peculiar excellence of a philosopher depends upon the ideas and affections of his mind being just and good; and the exercise of this excellence is the calling out of these into act and demonstrating them to the world by a virtuous conversation. . . .

*"Do not wish that events should happen as you desire, but be willing that they should happen as they do."*†

. . . That Providence should appoint everything just as we would have it, is neither possible for us to bring about, nor would it at all times be to our advantage, if we could; for it often happens that we are most eager for and fond of those things which are harmful to us. . . . It follows, then, that if we wish to be happy we must accustom ourselves to receive with an equable mind whatever Providence bestows. . . .

And this is the design of our good God, and His tender care

\* For previous sections see the *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 87 and 89.

† The Commentary of Simplicius on this Chapter is given at length in the *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 47, pp. 354-365, and No. 59, pp. 307-315.



over us, that the soul should neither cling too fast to the body and its pleasures and to the enjoyments of the world, nor yet abstain from them through fear, but from free choice, as considering that all our good and all our evil consists in our own choice and our own aversions. So that all the healing methods of His Providence are directed to no other purpose than this, the restoration of the soul to reason and prudence, and the preferring of a virtuous life. . . .

*"Upon every fresh accident, turn your eyes inward, and examine how you are qualified to encounter it. . . ."*

The great Creator, to Whom the soul of man owes his being, was pleased to give it such a frame and temper that it should not be constantly determined to sublime and heavenly things, nor always dwell above, as do the blessed Spirits, the Angels, and those others of a Divine and more excellent nature; but He hath ordered the matter so that the soul should sometimes descend to a state of matter and motion and mortality; be joined to the body, and converse with frail and corruptible things. But though He hath subjected the soul to these hazards and trials, yet He hath endowed her with particular faculties and powers suitable to each occasion; by means whereof she may both engage with all the accidents that can assault her, and come off without loss: nay, vanquish and keep them under, too.

*" . . . Nothing . . . can bode ill to you. . . . It is in your own power to make everything auspicious to you, because whatever disaster happens . . . you may, if you please, reap some very considerable advantage from it."*

We must consider that our own happiness and misery depend upon our own disposal and can come from nothing but ourselves. . . . Your body, it is true, may be sick or die, your reputation may be blasted, your estate destroyed or wasted, your wife or children taken from you, but still all this does not reach your self—that is, your reasoning mind. This can never be miserable, nay, it must and will be happy, in spite of all these ill-bodings, unless you consent to your own wretchedness; for all your good and evil depend wholly upon your self.

Nay, what is more, and the greatest security imaginable, these very misfortunes may conspire to render you yet more



happy, for out of this bitterness you may gather sweetness, and convert what is generally mistaken for misery to your own mighty benefit. And the greater these calamities are, the more considerable will be the advantage, provided you manage them prudently and behave yourself decently under them.

It is plain from hence that these are not evils, properly speaking, for whatever is so must always do hurt and can never change its nature so far as to contribute to any good effect. Since, then, these may be so ordered as to become subservient to your good, and since no good can come to you but what you yourself must be instrumental in, and accessory to, you must of necessity grant that all evils are not and cannot be evils to you yourself unless you consent to make them so; and that all they can pretend to is to affect something that belongs to or bears some distant relation to you.

*"Remember that when any man reviles you or strikes you, it is not the tongue that gives you the approbrious language, or the hand that deals the blow that injures or affronts you, but it is your own resentment of it, as an injury or affront, that makes it such to you." . . .*

That reproach and slanders are not such mighty afflictions, nor ought to move our indignation and disquiet our minds, will very easily be made to appear. For they must be either true or false; if the former, why be so very loath and so very much displeased to hear the truth? Our shame in this case comes too late, and we should have done much better in hating to commit the wrong than in hating to be told of it afterwards. But if what is said of us be false, it is the reporter who is the worse for it, and not ourselves.

*"If you resolve to make wisdom and virtue the study and business of your life, you must be sure to arm yourself beforehand against all the inconveniences and discouragements that are likely to attend this resolution. . . ."*

A man ought to harden himself against all scoffs and reproaches with the consideration of the dignity of human nature, and what is fitting to so excellent a being; and then to persevere in the choice of virtue, in spite of all the opposition to the contrary, and in a full persuasion that these good resolutions and desires are the motions and impulses of a Divine Power. For, in truth,



philosophy is the noblest and most valuable blessing that ever God bestowed upon mankind.

(To be continued)

## JEWELS

Banish all objects of lust, shut up all youth into the severest discipline that can be exercised in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chaste that came not thither so; such great care and wisdom is required to the right managing of this point. Suppose we could expel sin by this means; look how much we thus expel of sin, so much we expel of virtue; for the matter of them both is the same; remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This justifies the high Providence of God, Who though He command us temperance, justice, continence, yet pours out before us even to a profuseness all desirable things, . . .”

—John Milton (From the *Areopagitica*).

Comprehension of the Sacred Being is possible through spiritual understanding, fervent intellect, and true wisdom.

Decrease of sin and increase of good works, owing to good thoughts, good words and good deeds, arise really from the effort of the soul to practise religion, and through the strength of effort, steadiness of devotion and protection of soul which the faithful possess.

Hear ye then with your ears: see ye the bright flame with the eyes of the better mind. In the decision regarding religion each must choose for himself. Before the great need of the cause, awake ye all to our teaching.

—Zoroastrian Scriptures



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